

SDOS Birding Walks Risk Assessment Form

Assessor(s) : Tony Benton

Date of Assessment: 20 November 2025

Location: Sullington Manor Farm - RH20 4AE. **Parking -** Information about where to park will be provided on a visit by visit basis and will be determined by the operations on the farm on the day of visit. In all probability, parking will be around the Church at the top of the lane and the walk leader will act as a parking Marshall. It's also possible that a rough car park will be used at the top of the downs (on the South Downs Way) and that car sharing from the farm will be required because of limited space. Full details will be given in advance, based on a post code and what3words. You must, please, follow instructions regarding parking, due to the nature of the farm.

Advisory Notice: All participants are asked to read this document carefully. Walk leaders are not provided with First Aid kits, nor are they expected to be First Aid trained. All participants must take this into account and must also bring with them any medication that might be required.

Brief Description: A walk on a working farm, mostly (but not always) using public footpaths. The downland terrain can be steep and muddy in places and cattle might well be encountered, as well as working dogs and farm vehicles. Toilets are only available when the farm cafe is open - check their website for details:- <https://www.sullingtonmanorfarm.co.uk/>

Suggested Clothing: Dress according to the prevailing weather conditions and remember the potential for mud on a working farm. Trainers are generally not suitable, a walking pole or similar might be useful. The terrain can be steep, undulating, and with trip hazards, so footwear should reflect this.

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of Risk	Risk mitigation measures	Risk grading after controls put in place	Comments
--------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------------------	--	----------

<p>Adverse weather conditions, including (but not confined to) torrential rain, very high winds, snow, ice, thunder and lightning.</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>It is essential that any weather warnings issued by the Met Office are adhered to, especially if the public are asked to avoid non-essential travel.</p> <p>Walks will be immediately cancelled if lightning is a threat.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Adverse weather conditions can affect outings in different ways. By following Met Office advice, risks should be reduced to ‘low’ and where necessary, outings should be cancelled. Participants must dress according to the forecast and prevailing weather conditions. This includes clothing and footwear, and also appropriate liquids (eg hot or cold drinks line with the temperature).</p>
<p>Farm animals - this is working farm that raises cattle that are free grazing. There are also working dogs on the farm.</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Farm animals must be given space, and never cornered so that they lack an escape route. The farm dogs should be given space.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Participants must follow the directions of the walk leader when around farm animals (most likely Beef Cattle), or working dogs.</p>
<p>Farm vehicles and machinery.</p>	<p>All participants.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Listen and watch for farm vehicles on the move and step aside and warn other participants too. (Some people might be hearing impaired or distracted).</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Participants must follow the directions of the walk leader when around farm vehicles. Awareness that this is a working farm is key.</p>

<p>Uneven terrain, leading to trips, falls and slips.</p>	<p>All participants.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Participants need to remember that the terrain is challenging. (They need to be self aware and take great care.) For example, slippery after rain or ice, coupled with many trip hazards. The guidance of the walk leader must be followed and participants must exercise care and attention. They should look for trip hazards.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Appropriate footwear is essential, especially after a lot of rain or freezing conditions. Walking poles are a sensible option. Some of the downland terrain is steep. Participants will never be granted access to the orchard, except under exceptional circumstances, and with the explicit permission of the farmer.</p>
<p>Vegetation snags, which can catch eyes and bare skin, or penetrate clothing.</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Participants must be aware of these potential hazards, particularly around scrub vegetation and any copses that are entered.</p>	<p>Low</p>	
<p>Vehicles driven by general public</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Some of the walk might be on a narrow lane and around an informal hill-top car park, so always walk towards oncoming traffic and in single file.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Vigilance is required by all participants and single file is essential on any narrow lanes and public byways.</p>

<p>Ticks</p> <p>See government advice: https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/03/21/what-is-lyme-disease-and-why-do-we-need-to-be-tick-aware/</p>	All participants	Medium	Best to wear clothing that covers arms and legs.	Low	Inspect arms and legs after the walk for ticks. Refer to GP if concerned.
Snakes	All participants	Medium	Snakes should not be touched, nor should you get close to take photographs. Adders must be treated with respect. Stout footwear provides a level of protection and is recommended.	Low	In the summer months in particular, snakes can be present. Trainers and sandals do not provide much protection and are most definitely not recommended on this walk.
Barbed wire and electric fences	All participants	Medium	Look out for barbed wire and avoid. Never touch electric fences.	Low	Electric fences are used to control grazing and should be avoided. Do not touch, nor attempt to cross unless the farm staff have told us the fence is off.
Stiles and gates	All participants	Medium	Care to be taken when climbing stiles or gates and participants should ask for help if they feel challenged.	Low	Stiles and gates can't be avoided so participants should think about their fitness and mobility in advance.

Risk Assessment Template 13/12/2025 TL